

INDIANA JEWISH HISTORY

NATHAN FELDMAN —  
A LITTLE-KNOWN AMERICAN JEWISH HERO  
BY  
JOSEPH LEVINE

A LITTLE HISTORY OF DR. E. E. YOSOWIZ  
AND HIS FAMILY  
BY  
DR. EDWARD E. YOSOWITZ

THE LIFE OF MAX TANNENBAUM —  
A PROFILE OF INSPIRATION  
BY  
JOHN A. BOWERMAN

A WORLD WAR II EXPERIENCE  
BY  
ANNE SCHNEIDER

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION  
A HISTORY OF THE  
TERRE HAUTE JEWISH COMMUNITY  
AN INTERIM REPORT  
BY  
HERMAN KOREN, R.P.S., M.P.H., H.S.D.

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## INTRODUCTION

Except for the article on Max Tannenbaum which was written by John A. Bowerman, all of the other articles in this booklet were written by members of the Indiana Jewish Historical Society (IJHS). The Tannenbaum article originally appeared in the *Journal Review — Montgomery Magazine* of Crawfordsville, Indiana, and we obtained permission to reprint it.

Dr. Edward E. Yosowitz is a practicing physician in Houston, Texas.

Anne Schneider is the wife of Dr. Louis A. Schneider who is the chief pathologist of the St. Joseph's Hospital in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She served in the Pacific area during World War II.

Dr. Herman Koren is a Professor of Environmental Health and Safety on the faculty of the Indiana State University. The report included in this volume was presented at the thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Indiana Jewish Historical Society.

Joseph Levine is the Executive Secretary of the IJHS and his story about Nathan Feldman relates to the grandfather of Earl Brenn who is the third vice-president of the Indiana Jewish Historical Society.

We invite the members of the IJHS to submit articles for our publications.

Joseph Levine  
Executive Secretary

**NATHAN FELDMAN—  
A LITTLE-KNOWN AMERICAN JEWISH HERO  
by  
Joseph Levine**

Earl Brenn and his sisters Berniece Schankerman and Lorraine Goldenberg, patron members of the Indiana Jewish Historical Society, told me the story of their maternal grandfather who was decorated by the U.S. Army for bravery almost one hundred years ago. I want to share the story with our members.

Nathan Feldman, the grandfather, was born in Lodz, Poland in 1869. Unfortunately, we know nothing about the early history of Nathan, except that he came alone to America in 1886 at the age of seventeen. Two years later, the young man was unemployed and living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The story is that, at the suggestion of a friend, Nathan enlisted in the U.S. Army on April 5, 1888 for a period of five years. We have a copy of his enlistment papers, which he signed with an X and listed his occupation as a tailor. Little did Nathan know that he would be assigned to Troop K of the Seventh Cavalry at Fort Riley, Kansas, which partook in the Battle of the Wounded Knee Creek.

According to documents from the Adjutant General's office of the War Department, we learn that Nathan Feldman served over thirty days in the campaign against the Indians in South Dakota



during November of 1890 and January 1891. In a document of the Headquarters of the Army dated March 20, 1891, we read the following:

Captain L. A. Hare of the 7th Cavalry recommended this man for a Certificate of Merit for distinguished service under the following circumstances as related by the Regimental Adjutant of the Regimental Commander (Col. Forsyte). The adjutant states that at the fight of the Wounded Knee Creek, S. D. on December 29, 1890, Private Feldman volunteered to accompany Lt. Preston of the 9th Cavalry to the Pine Ridge Agency. That officer having requested the detail of a man to go with him.... I consider him (Feldman) as worthy of regards in the shape of a certificate of merit and so reported to Captain Hare, the troop commander.

Col. Forsyte approves recommendation of troop commander and says that Private Feldman made the ride of 16 miles in one hour and at its completion fell from the horse exhausted, that when he undertook it, it was more than probable that hostile Indians would meet him on the way.

One government document records that:

When Lt. Preston asked for volunteers, Private Feldman was the only volunteer who asked if he could go. "I detailed Private Feldman for the duty and selected a good horse for him."

Another government document reads as follows:

*AR 176 provides that certificate of merit will be awarded for extraordinary acts of gallantry performed by a soldier in the presence of the enemy. Such certificate entitles the soldier to \$2 per month additional pay from the date of bravery.*

We learned that after Nathan was discharged from the Army, he came to Chicago where his brother, Ben, had a picture frame company. The two brothers later married Emma and Theresa Werthan from Nashville, Tennessee. The story is told that Mr. and Mrs. Werthan, Sr. had four daughters. Because they wanted the girls to marry Jewish boys, Emma and Theresa were brought to Chicago where they married the Feldmans. Members of the Werthan family still live in Nashville.

Nathan and Emma were the parents of Tillie Hammerman (deceased); Fannie Brenn (deceased); Theresa Shapiro, living in Indianapolis, Indiana; Hurley Feltman, living in Huntington, Indiana; Esther Unger (deceased); William Feldman, living in LaPorte, Indiana; and Irene Goldstein, who resides in Niles, Michigan.

Nathan and Emma had thirteen grandchildren, of which twelve are still living.

After working with his brother Ben, Nathan opened a candy store in the Albany Park section of Chicago. From what we learned, Nathan ran this small store for about thirty years prior to his retirement. He died in 1953 at the age of 84, and is buried in the Waldheim Jewish cemetery in Chicago.

Nathan's major interests were his small store and his large family. He was a devoted husband and father. When he could, he would attend baseball games. After he retired at the age of 64, he



loved to watch his friends bowl.

This ends the story about the little-known Jewish hero. Like many other Jewish immigrants, Nathan loved this country and was willing to sacrifice his life when he volunteered for the dangerous mission.

There has been considerable controversy among American historians about the Battle of the Wounded Knee Creek. The following article appeared in a Fort Lauderdale newspaper on November 29, 1975, which is worth reading:

### **CAVALRY SHOWED RESTRAINT AT WOUNDED KNEE — ARMY**

*The Associated Press*

**WASHINGTON** — The Army has concluded it is "unfair and inaccurate" to describe as a massacre the killing of nearly 150 Indians at Wounded Knee, S. D., 85 years ago today.

The Army, after a new study, denied that cavalrymen engaged in "deliberate, intentional shooting of helpless persons" in an episode that modern-day advocates of Indian rights have cited as a brutal example of mistreatment.

"Contrary to the popular conception of the Wounded Knee episode, the civilian authorities and the Army showed great restraint and compassion in the events leading up to the encounter," the Army said in a report to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"Restraint and precautions were even observed during the battle.

"It is undisputed that an Indian fired the first shot. It is clear also that a number of Indians opened fire with concealed weapons.

". . . There is not an iota of evidence that any orders were issued, nor can it be implied that there was any indiscriminate killing. In fact, numerous orders were issued to control the firing," it said.

The report, based on study by Army historians of official records and private publications, was sent to the panel in opposition to a bill that would pay \$3,000 to heirs of 146 Sioux men, women and children killed and at least 33 injured at Wounded Knee on December 29, 1890.

## A LITTLE HISTORY OF DR. E. E. YOSOWITZ AND HIS FAMILY

by

Dr. Edward E. Yosowitz

Living in Houston, Texas, the Oil Capitol of the United States, it struck as odd that my Grandpa and his brothers were among the pioneers of this amazing Oil Age.

My grandfather's two older brothers had come from Europe in the surge of immigrants that came to America in the late 1800s and early 1900s from Czechoslovakia. There were some cousins living in Pennsylvania near Titusville, the original Oil Boom center, and that is where they went to live.

The Oil Boom was just like the Gold Rush, and when there was news of a big strike in Illinois, the brothers went with the crowd. The Gushers were flooding the corn fields in Centralia, Olney, and other areas in southern Illinois.

Simon and Boris joined the group of workers in the oil fields. Joined the rowdy, rich with money spilling out of their pockets--friends. Thus, they were introduced to America, where the streets truly were paved with gold--black gold--.

The oil companies brought in both pipe and equipment. If their well did not burst out, they would cap it, and try another spot. They

would sell the pipe left in the "dry hole" for a meager amount, glad to realize any amount of money.

Simon and Boris, learning the ways of their enterprising friends, rented a lot in the oil field, put up a "lean-to" and bought a couple of "capped" wells. Even though they didn't speak English very well, they were able to hire some oil roustabouts with oil knowledge and the "know how" to retrieve the pipe from the ground. That is how they became "suppliers of pipe and other equipment." There were so many "wild cat" wells that came in for millions of barrels that this perimeter business of retrieving pipe meant very little to the big enterprises. They gladly let this part of the business to people like Simon and Boris.

Boris and Simon made money--spent it too--but they remembered their little brother Ben, still living the little "Shtetl" back in Czechoslovakia. They sent him a steamship ticket, and one day, there he was!--in Lawrenceville, Illinois where the brothers lived.

My grandpa was a small man, about five feet, five inches tall. A tailor by trade. Surely not a person to work in the oil fields. What was he to do?

He thought about it, and said to himself--"those rough, boisterous men need their clothes taken care of. They need them cleaned and pressed, the rips sewn up since most had not brought their wives."

Little Ben carried his equipment with him to the fields. "Bennie" (what they called him) saved his money. His business was good. He rented a little store front where comfortable, he could sit on his tailor's bench and quietly mend his customer's clothes.

One of his friends from the field was going to get married. Bennie had found a place to buy suit material to make a "fine" suit. How proud his friend was to stand up beside his beautiful



bride in such finery. Bennie was known as the best tailor in all the oil fields and was kept very busy. He added shirts, and socks, and pretty soon, shoes, and ties for his customers. (There is a sign above the larger store which reads "since 1910"--my uncle still operates this store--), A Fine Men's Store.--

His brothers paid little attention to their adopted country. They were only interested in all the fine money they were making, money enough to go back to Europe anytime they felt like it. They visited their wives and children often.

Ben had no family, so, in his spare time, he studied all about America. He loved America. He learned the language, was able to read the newspaper. He found out how to become a citizen of his new land and studied the special textbooks needed for this purpose. Ben N. Yosowitz, new American Citizen!

(Sadly, at the outbreak of World War I, his brother Simon, and brother, Boris, were unable to return from Europe. They were not U.S. Citizens! They never were able to come back. They were victims of the Holocaust. However, some of their children were rescued by my Grandpa Ben.)

Lawrenceville was booming. Texaco was building a modern oil refinery there. It was the newest and the finest. Bennie felt at home and had no desire to go to the "Big City"---except to find a beautiful wife.

Jennie came from Chicago--and now, happily, he had what he wanted. They had three sons, (my father was Joseph, the middle child).

There were small towns all around about thirty miles or less apart, and the Jewish families kept in touch with each other.

My mom's great-uncle lived in Robinson, Illinois, about thirty miles from Lawrenceville. (incidentally, that is where Marathon built its



early huge refinery which is still one of their main ones.) My mom's great-uncle also was in the pipe business. Also, bought "junk." He and his wife were comfortable and proud of their little town. They raised six children. The boys were on the football teams. They were devout Jews and although there was no temple, they practiced their Judaism.

My mom was born in Indianapolis, Sally Maurer. My Grandfather Maurer, Grandmother, and her brother and sister-in-law would go to visit her Uncle Isaac. My mother would go too. She was thirteen years old when she met my Dad. My Dad and his parents would be invited to the Abels home whenever the Indianapolis relatives were coming to visit. My mother would sing, my Father would play the piano, and my Uncle Mandell would perform on the violin. There was no radio or television in those days, so families many times entertained in this way. My Grandpa Maurer loved a good poker game--and so did Bennie and Jennie. While they played, my mother and the Yosowitz boys got to know each other well. My mother and father met again nine years later and were married.

Vincennes, Indiana had a small Jewish Synagogue. Vincennes was ten miles from Lawrenceville; thirty miles from Robinson; ten miles from Washington, Indiana. All little towns spoking out. The Jewish families from these nearby towns congregated together for prayer and social events. At the High Holiday time, they were even able to "hire" a Rabbi to lead our Services.

Most of our Jewish people were merchants in their respective towns. They had the small department store; the Family Speciality Shops for Women or Men; the Junk Yards, and pipe and supplies for the oil fields.

Proud to tell you that the original Gimbels

Store, started by Bernard Gimbel is still in business, even though the Gimbels have long gone away to New York. They never forget their origin, and acknowledge it in their "store history."

Also, Vincennes University was the first college in Indiana. It is still a very active, important two year College rated highly scholastically. This little University has nationally won the Basketball Championship twice in their class.

That is where I was born, Vincennes, Indiana.

My mother and father had one of those speciality shops--a Women's Exclusive Shop which they managed for thirty-eight years. "Joseph's" was opened when my Dad was nineteen, and after five years, he married my mother. They worked together until his death in 1978.

This small town was a good place for my two sisters and me to spend our early life. We grew up with good, loyal friends. I played basketball at the Y.M.C.A. I learned how to play chess at the "Y", too. I played the trumpet in the band. One of my sisters played the saxophone. My other sister was active in Art. All the family loved Drama, and were in many plays.

Four of my best friends (including myself) that graduated in our High School Class graduated together as Doctors from Indiana University.

I am very proud to have been a small-town, Mid-Western, "Square" kid.

## THE LIFE OF MAX TANNENBAUM —

### A Profile of Inspiration

by

John A. Bowerman

In 1877, Moses Max Tannenbaum, with his brother Sol Tannenbaum, chose to come to America from his native Germany. Ultimately, he came to Crawfordsville where he married and raised two children. Max K. Tannenbaum, the last surviving son, passed away November 18, 1984, ending the family line of only two generations in this country. Max's legacy, however, will continue for years to come to reflect his love for this community, and his life will always be a profile of inspiration.

We have said that the father was born in Germany. This was on December 14, 1857. He was only 30 years of age when he came to this country, first going to Bloomington, Indiana, and then, after three years, moving to Crawfordsville.

He came to this city to become associated with his uncle, Eli Kahn, in a clothing store located on East Main Street.

Mr. Kahn had a daughter, Ida, who later would become the wife of Moses and Max and the mother of the profile of whom we now write. Their marriage took place in 1892.

The Kahn home was on Water Street. The residence is now the location of the Carl Bruder

Real Estate Agency, and has been traditionally known as "Queen Anne's Cottage." It was in this house that Ida Kahn was born.

Eli Kahn died in 1883, and at that time Sol Tannenbaum, a brother, became associated with Max Sr. The store was moved a couple of times, but finally was relocated in the original building on East Main Street where Eli Kahn had first established a business site.

Moses Max Tannebaum was a most respected citizen of the Crawfordsville community. He was considered an innovative business man and had the confidence of all his business associates.

He was a member of the Red Man's Lodge and the Independent Order of the Odd Fellows. He was an ardent fisherman and loved to garden. He passed away December 29, 1930. His funeral was conducted in the family home at 507 W. Main St., and burial took place at Indianapolis.

Norman was the first son born to Max and Ida Tannenbaum. He was graduated from Crawfordsville High School in 1911. This was the year Crawfordsville won the first high school basketball state tournament and it was in the middle of the period in which Miss Anna Willson served as high school principal.

Norman continued his studies at Wabash College where he was considered as a "whiz kid." He was not just a good student, but was a prodigious reader and a very inquiring type of student. He was elected to Phi Beta Kappa during his junior year. Dr. Garner in chemistry and Dr. Thomas in biology so greatly influenced him that he resolved to become a medical doctor rather than to assist in carrying on the family business.

After his graduation from Wabash, he served briefly as an instructor in zoology, and then completed his medical studies at John Hopkins University. He did his internship in



New York and continued to maintain his home there.

He specialized in the study of cancer and became one of the country's leading authorities on breast cancer.

He became a staff doctor at the Presbyterian Memorial Hospital in New York and served as head of the breast cancer division.

He was a lecturer at the Cornell University Medical Center in New York and published monographs on breast cancer for medical meetings both in this country and in Europe.

Because of the ethnic connotation, Dr. Tannenbaum changed his surname to Treves. This action was very disturbing to his brother Max, who greatly revered the family heritage. Norman continued to prosper financially, and in 1932 married Rebecca Bacharach, a member of a wealthy Jewish family living in Cincinnati. Max served as best man for his brother, so apparently the rift caused by this name change was being healed.

Dr. Treves was elected to the Wabash College Board of Trustees in the early 1950s, and gave much attention to this relationship. As is so true of nearly all Wabash graduates, he loved the college and appreciated the beauty of the campus, being especially fond of the trees that cover the grounds. He became a close friend of President Byron Trippet, and from this relationship came plans for assisting Wabash financially after his death.

This desire was greatly enhanced by his admiration for Dr. Willis Johnson, who had done so much for the college's biological sciences. At his death, Dr. Treves left over a half-million dollars to his beloved college.

His wife, Rebecca, fell victim to multiple sclerosis and became an invalid. After her death, Norman seemed to care little about taking care of his own health. It is ironic that one who prolonged so many lives was so careless about his own.



During his later days, Max seemed to have the same attitude. In many ways, Norman had a tremendous influence on the life of his younger brother.

While Norman was earning honors at Wabash, Max was attending Crawfordsville High School. This was during the last years of Anna Willson's tenure as principal. He passed up his senior year at Crawfordsville to attend Military School at Staunton, Virginia. Had he remained at Crawfordsville, he would have graduated with the Class of 1918. He returned to his home town and entered Wabash College in the fall of 1918, graduating in 1922, with Phi Beta Kappa honors like his brother, Norman.

At Wabash he was a member of the Association of Independent Men. He also belonged to the Hegira Club, which was an organization of students who showed a marked interest and capacity for the study of history. During his senior year he was a member of the Law Club.

Another member of these two respective clubs was David Peck. David Peck would have been a senior at Crawfordsville High School in the fall of 1919. However, he was so upset when Miss Anna's contract as principal was not renewed, that he refused to continue high school.

His father asked President Lewis Mackintosh what might be done, and President Mac answered, "Enroll him at Wabash." Peck enrolled and graduated in three years with Phi Beta Kappa honors. We will touch again on the lifetime friendship of Tannenbaum and Peck.

During his junior and senior years, Max served as secretary of the Hegira Club. He was also a member of the Three J Club. This was an organization of men who were members of the Masonic Order. It was founded in 1914 to stimulate interest in Masonry and to promote fellowship. It no longer exists at the college.

Earlier we wrote that Mr. Tannenbaum enrolled at Wabash in the fall of 1918. In September of that year the local college, like so many colleges across the land, had signed a contract with the War Department for a unit of the Student's Army Training Corps. October first was the date on which S.A.T.C. units all over the country were to be inducted. Two barracks were erected on the approximate site of the present College Chapel.

Because of his previous experience at Staunton, Mr. Tannebaum was quickly accepted into the Wabash Unit. Later he would serve his country in World War II, thereby having the distinction of being in military service in both of the world conflicts.

His Wabash years greatly influenced his life. We have mentioned his close friendship with David Peck, who later would become one of this country's most outstanding attorneys. The love of history spawned on the Wabash campus continued his entire life. Although Historian Ted Gronert was not at Wabash during Max's time of study, they were to become close friends in later years.

After the Wabash years, he graduated from the Harvard Law School, and for a period was employed by the Sullivan and Cromwell Law Firm in New York City. For several years, his longtime friend, David Peck, was a partner in this prestigious company.

After the death of his father, Max felt it best to return to Crawfordsville and manage the stock and bond portfolio which was now in his mother's name. He did well in managing this, and also handled the funds of the Bischof Corporation which owned stock, bonds and real property located on Main Street in Crawfordsville.

Perhaps this is the time to touch briefly on the life of Louis Bishof, because his influence upon the life of our subject was also very great. Bischof was an uncle of Ida Kahn Tannenbaum.

Shortly before the Civil War he was one of seven children brought to America by Jacob and Minnie Bischof. Their native home was Heidelberg. The dream of the tremendous possibilities of America never left this family as they became a part of their new adopted country.

The family first settled in Terre Haute. When Louis was 17 he came to Crawfordsville to work in the Eli Kahn Store. He soon became a partner with Jacob Ferber at a store located three doors south of the Washington and Main streets intersection.

Mr. Ferber gained more fame from being the father of Edna Ferber, the prolific writer, than he did as a merchant.

In time Bischof opened the "Big Store" on East Main Street, the present site of the Mini Mall. This store was considered the marvel of its time and has been discussed more fully in an earlier Profile of Inspiration.

Louis Bischof lived for a time in the Tannenbaum home on West Main Street. He was a super salesman and a master at merchandising. In 1925 the store faced financial problems and was sold.

The disastrous fire of 1933 wiped out the building. Bischof passed away on September 18, 1935, but Uncle "Louie" was one whom our subject continued to revere.

Ida Tannenbaum, the mother of our profile, was one of this area's most respected ladies. She was a neat, prim lady who handled well all of the social graces. She was highly regarded by both of her sons and each went out of his way to please her. In one of Max's letters to his brother he wrote: "Last night we went to a local dramatic presentation. I went only because Mother wanted to go."

For the elegant wedding of Norman, mentioned earlier, Ida took care of the details. Ted



Gronert, in the "Sugar Creek Saga," mentions her as being one who urged others into action. She lived with her son, Max, on West Main, next to Vernon Court, and later at their last home on East Wabash. When Max was serving in World War II the correspondence between the two was regular and often. Her influence on both Norman and Max was indelible.

Like most of us, Max was, in many ways, an enigma. He had many friends, but the passage of time was needed for one to have his complete confidence. He did not like to talk about himself. He was a lover of poetry, music and history. He was an excellent bridge player and played often.

He was extremely loyal to the friends whom he came to completely trust. He was hurt many times by those who, by remark or action, looked down on his religion. He was one time asked if he ever belonged to a local service club and his reply was, "No, I've never been asked." He was, for a time extremely active in a fraternal organization, but later he cut all ties and withdrew completely from the group.

Later in life he became extremely interested in the Montgomery County Historical Society. It was his dream for this society to become sole owner of Lane Place and the spacious surrounding grounds. His interest was marked by financial support, and he also served as secretary and later as president of this local group. For years he served as liaison representative from the organization to the county and city governments. His gracious and courteous manner paved the way for a fine relationship. His knowledge of past county history provided a bridge of interest for those wishing to increase their understanding.

When the county jail on North Washington Street was abandoned for the new modern structure, Mr. Tannenbaum was the first to speak of preservation of the building. Through his direct

efforts, the Montgomery County Cultural Foundation was given tax exempt status, and later the structure was deeded to the newly formed group. Max made an exhaustive study of the small number of other jails in the country with a revolving cell block. Again he supported financially that which he verbally applauded. His enthusiasm was responsible in the enlistment of many other citizens becoming involved in this cause.

There were many other interests in his life. He was an avid collector of stamps, coins, plates and books. He bought and sold real estate, not so much for capital gain, but for the joy of the transaction. From this activity, a lasting friendship was established with Billy Smith, who became his personal realtor. We have written earlier that he loved music. His most enjoyable Sunday afternoons were those spent with John Clements and Bill Fobes listening to records which he had accumulated over the years.

During his active years in legal work, his chief interest revolved around corporations. It is said that few persons were better able to analyze a corporation financial statement.

An annual meeting of a corporation in which he held stock took place one year in Louisiana. Mr. Tannenbaum decided to attend the affair and to voice his protest of the company's activity. He was the only stockholder to be present outside the officers. He made his point and was given a sincere welcome by those in charge.

His mind, since childhood, had been tuned to financial discussion. His Uncle Sol was elected to the board of the First National Bank in 1898. When Captain Herron, at the age of 84, resigned in 1927, Sol was elected president. He guided the bank through the stock market crash of 1929 and the period of banking reform which followed. He had done his job well.



Mr. Tannenbaum's final illness was sudden, as he would have preferred had there been a choice. He never recovered from surgery and quietly passed away on the date we have mentioned earlier. His final will and testament reflected his interests and desires while living.

Certain special bequests were made to relatives, friends and charitable groups. His home, furniture, china and silverware were given to the Montgomery County Cultural Foundation. The residual estate was to be placed in a trust from which the above foundation would receive 50 percent of the income, the Montgomery County Historical Society would be given 30 percent of the income, with the remaining income to be used for general charitable purposes in his beloved county.

He had chosen the First National Bank and Trust Company of Crawfordsville to be the trustee. A fine portrait painted by Lee Detchon, a friend from childhood, will hang in the Old Jail Museum, as a reminder of a kindly man who passed this way.

Max never married and few relatives remain, but there will be a host of individuals, down through the years, who will benefit and enjoy the dreams of this man whose family chose America for a home.

His close friend, Rev. Wallace McDonald, gave the address at his final memorial. This grand minister concluded a prayer with the words: "We thank Thee for his friendship, for his interest and active part in the causes of the community. We thank Thee for the heritage which was his and for his own ideals." This grand mosaic shines forth as a continuing profile of inspiration.

## A WORLD WAR II EXPERIENCE

by

Anne Schneider

Perhaps some of you who read this were there forty years ago in the Philippines when Yom Kippur services were held on the island of Leyte in the only location large enough to hold all the Jewish servicemen stationed in the islands — a boxing stadium.

Following is a letter written to her parents by Lt. Anne L. Bass (Mrs. Louis A. Schneider of Fort Wayne, Indiana) who was a dietitian with The 126th General Hospital on Leyte, Yom Kippur, September 17, 1945.

Dear Mama and Papa,

How can I describe the Services last night? I expect to go to many more Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Services in years to come, but this year's will always stand out in my memory. Can you picture an immense in-door boxing stadium, benches piled clear up to the top, filled with G.I.'s some even wearing talaisim — and in the center of the stadium on the raised square platform (the boxing ring) stood the Oren Kodesh and the Rabbi (Chaplain Samuel Silver) and his

3 chazanim (the Lind brothers of Chicago — Murray, Philip and Dale). I may hear the Kol Nidre sung more beautifully some day and in more elegant surroundings but never as impressively. And to hear those thousands of G.I. voices singing in unison the Yom Kippur prayers was a very moving and prideful experience.

To cap it off--in the middle of the service the generator failed and the lights went out, but magically, the whole stadium became illuminated by tiny pin-points of light--from the flashlights our boys carried--an unforgettable sight and a Yom Kippur service that I will always cherish.

# FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

## A History of the Terre Haute Jewish Community

### An Interim Report

by

Herman Koren, R.P.S., M.P.H., H.S.D.

## INTRODUCTION

The Jewish history of Terre Haute is entwined with the Jewish history of the United States and with the history of Vigo County, Indiana. The Jews who first came to the United States in 1654, settled along the east coast of the country. By the late 1700s, such famous Jewish men as David and Moses Franks, Bernard and Michael Gratz, Joseph Simon, and Levy Andrew Levy, were involved with expansion into Indiana and Illinois. They pioneered the routes for which the merchandize flowed from the Jewish firms of Pennsylvania into Illinois and Indiana in exchange for the furs which came from these territories. They also helped outfit the George Rogers Clark expedition to Vincennes, Indiana in 1799 and were part of the opening of the Northwest Territory.<sup>1</sup> Samuel Judah, a member of a well known Jewish family from the East, came to Vincennes about 1814. He was one of the earliest lawyers in the Indiana Territory. After the Revolutionary War, many impoverished Jews joined the Connecticut Yankees with a pack on the back or a pack on a mule and traveled



through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky, Ohio, and points to the south and west. The Jews became so numerous as peddlers that the peddlers became known as Jew peddlers. They opened stores in St. Louis, Cincinnati, Lexington, Detroit, and other small cities and towns.<sup>2</sup> Terre Haute became important when on October 28, 1811, General Harrison built Fort Harrison and then moved on to the famous Battle of Tippecanoe. Nationwide attention was now given to the Wabash Valley because of its mild climate, fertile soil and beauty. All roads lead to Fort Harrison and the west. People traveled by water to Fort Harrison. This became the first means of travel which would eventually expand into comprehensive road systems and railroad systems.<sup>3</sup> In fact, Terre Haute became the hub of a wheel which went in all directions. To the west was St. Louis, to the east Indianapolis, to the north Chicago, to the northeast Cleveland, to the southeast Cincinnati, and to the south Louisville.

In 1818, the original proprietors of Terre Haute were not satisfied with the growth of the town, so they advertised in the eastern newspapers for settlers especially craftsmen and mechanics. It was noted that the town would be the county seat with courts and attending businesses. By 1824, Terre Haute had a brisk young economy. It was second in pork packing in the United States. It had factories which ranged from soap making to candle making. The cooperage business boomed since barrels were needed for pork packing, whiskey and other products.<sup>4</sup>

### *THE EARLY JEWS OF TERRE HAUTE*

In 1818, according to records of peddlers' licenses and land sales records, a Samuel Goodman



was given a license for general merchandise and liquor. Also, in 1818 on October 24, we are introduced to the mysterious Caleb Arnold who purchases a town plot at the mouth of Honey Creek and plans the town of Smyrna. Caleb Arnold was subsequently involved in numerous land deals for a period of at least twelve years. He went into bankruptcy and eventually died in the 1850s.<sup>5</sup> An attempt is now being made to determine if either of the gentlemen were Jewish. In 1818, according to land records on August 11, John M. Coleman sold lot #95, Terre Haute to Samuel Jacobs. Samuel Jacobs in turn became the owner of this lot along with a Mr. Levy on December 7, 1818.<sup>6</sup> Levy and Jacobs were apparently the first Jewish firm in Terre Haute. They had a variety of merchandise which they sold from a store directly across from the existing courthouse and east of it.<sup>7</sup> The store was sold or closed prior to 1826. A newspaper ad appearing in 1826 states that a few of Levi-Jacobs superior durable razor straps are left over for sale at the stores of Mr. C. Rose, etc.<sup>8</sup>

The first Jewish person to actually be traced to Terre Haute was the previously mentioned Samuel Judah. According to land records, he purchased on December 5, 1827 from the state of Indiana the northwest corner of section 14, township 13, range 10.<sup>9</sup> Samuel Judah went on to become a state legislator between 1827 and 1840 where he served five terms. He also had the honor of becoming the Speaker of the 25th General Assembly of the State of Indiana.<sup>10</sup>

Despite reports that were mentioned in the Jewish Encyclopedia<sup>11</sup> and in Pearl B. Becker's article in the United Temple,<sup>12</sup> no record of Jews were found in the newspapers of Terre Haute in 1823 to 1825. Although Jews

may have been in Terre Haute at that time, including the previously mentioned business of Samuel Jacobs and Levi, nothing appeared in the newspapers.

From 1825 to 1845, a period of twenty years, there has been very little investigation concerning the possibility of Jewish families living in the Terre Haute area. This time period will be evaluated carefully at a later date when time will allow.

### **THE ERA FROM 1845 TO 1865--PRE CIVIL WAR AND CIVIL WAR TIMES**

This early organization period was a time when Jewish life in Europe was facing serious difficulties. First in Germany in 1840 the new King of Prussia, William the 4th helped restore a more liberal way of life and permitted liberal views. During the following years there was great uncertainty and finally the Revolution of 1848 and the counterrevolution occurred. Constant wars between Austria and Prussia as well as other countries kept Germany in a turmoil. As a result of this tumultuous period, there was an immigration between 1840 and 1880 to the United States of seven million Christians and two hundred thousand Jews from Europe. The American Jewish population grew from 50 thousand to 250 thousand people. The Christian immigrants, who were mostly peasants became farmers and laborers, whereas the Jewish immigrants who were mostly lower middle class became small scale entrepreneurs. The German Jews moved out to the frontier and headed west to Cincinnati, Indiana, and St. Louis. They worked hard, lived frugally and saved their money to invest in businesses of their own. The Jews went to banking and retailing. They extended

mail order businesses, pioneered installment buying and introduced a stream of innovative ideas. Important Jews included the Gugenheims, Warbergs, Rosenwalds, Strausses, Schiffs, Kahns, Waltmans, and Gimbels. Rabbis, both Orthodox and Reform, came to the United States with the German Jews.<sup>13</sup>

The Terre Haute community experience before the Civil War was very southern in character. However, Terre Haute was a schizoid community. People came from Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. At the same time the underground railroad run by the Quakers existed in Honey Creek Township. Before the Civil War, the Knights of the Golden Circle were prominent and after the Civil War, the Ku Klux Klan. By 1850, most of the business done around the courthouse was on Wabash Avenue or Third Street. At that time Wabash Avenue was called National Road and Third Street was Market Street. Terre Haute was a thriving community built by hard work, prudence and the ingenuity of the residents. A period of rapid immigration and growth in business occurred in 1850. The population was approximately 4,000. The railroads opened between Terre Haute and Indianapolis. In 1853 Terre Haute became incorporated as a city and it continued to grow. The great natural resources of the area including iron and coal, a fertile farm land, a lovely place to live, three major routes of transportation including the National Highway, the Wabash and Erie Canals, and the railroads lead to an extraordinarily busy city that grew very rapidly. By 1856, stores and business houses were lit by gas. By 1858, the city was connected by railroad and canal to all points. From 1850 to 1860 there was a 166% increase in growth of the city. From 1860 to 1870 another 100% growth in the city. Terre Haute was now ranked fourth among the cities of Indiana in wealth and population.<sup>14</sup> In 1865 the Indiana State Legislature created Indiana State Normal



School which later became Indiana State University.

During the Civil War, families wore store clothes because the women did not have time to weave the cloth or sew the garments for the family clothing. This was the end of a big part of home sewing of clothing and the beginning of a lot of Jewish businesses.

In 1845, David H. Arnold and others purchased a piece of land, which is located at First Street and Eighth Avenue in Terre Haute, for a Jewish cemetery. This information comes from the abstract of the property and from a legal action taken in 1889 to "quiet the deed" in order for the land to be sold to another person.<sup>15,16</sup> It would seem that Jews lived in Terre Haute prior to the 1845 date and that since someone had died possibly in the Arnold family or one of the associated families, this land had been purchased. It might be well to assume that David Arnold's name appeared on the sale because he was listed as a merchant in Terre Haute as early as 1848 in a newspaper advertisement (additional study will be carried out to determine when he actually arrived in the community).

In the year of 1849, eight to ten Jewish families (this material comes from a translation of an actual manuscript currently being held in the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati) lived in Terre Haute. Because of several deaths the need was felt for a burial place and in 1849 such a place was bought for one hundred dollars by H. Moss, David Marsh, D. H. Arnold, and Joseph Billigheimer.<sup>17</sup> (Possibly Moss, Marsh, and Billigheimer helped pay off the purchase of the land or bought part of the burial land. This is a subject that will need to be investigated further if possible.) It was decided at that time that Jews who might live in Terre Haute at a later time could become members if they paid a certain



sum of money. The society existed several years, but it became so large that the individuals expressed a need to change the burial society into a combination Jewish community and congregation. For this purpose all members of the society met on the 28th of March 1858 to discuss the situation. On the motion of Leopold Goodman, a committee of five men were elected in order to discuss the best way in which a Jewish congregation could be founded and give a report in fourteen days. This committee was composed of N. Berlinger, Charles Springer, B. Coopenheimer, Charles Altshuler, and Sam Mack. The committee report was as follows: the committee suggested a plan to found a Jewish congregation in Terre Haute. The following items were part of the plan:

1. That in order to found a congregation the Terre Haute Jewish Burial Society should change to a Jewish Congregation,

2. That all present members of the burial society should enjoy all the rights of membership of the congregation,

3. That for the purpose of a constitution and by laws a draft would be prepared,

4. That a fund would be established and all members of the congregation would pledge a voluntary sum which would be paid within thirty days,

5. That to defray the cost of the congregation regular monthly dues would be paid,

6. That after organizing the congregation the entrance fee for a married person would be \$15 and for a single person \$10,

7. A man who could carry out the functions of a chasan and chochet would be employed and would be responsible for giving religious instruction to the children of the congregation and that his salary should be \$250 to \$300 a year,

8. That the congregation should take the necessary steps to obtain such a person.

This report was adopted unanimously and it was decided to draft a constitution and by laws which were to be presented at the next meeting. A committee was selected to draft a constitution. It was decided to name the organization The Terre Haute Zion Gemeinde. Please note that the word *Gemeinde* means more than just a congregation and in fact means a fraternal order that assist Jews in time of need. At the time of this meeting, twelve men contributed \$160 to start the first congregation. These men included Jacob Bischof, L. Goodman, S. Berlau, D. H. Arnold, (made the largest contribution) N. Erlanger, Mr. Northeimer, I. Rosenthal, B. Coopenheimer, Charles Springer, Sam Mack, Charles Alshuler, J. Grounauer. On May 2, 1858, the first protocol of the Terre Haute Zion Gemeinde meeting occurred. The first president elected was Mr. Charles Alshuler. The committee decided to invite unmarried people to the congregation. The following individuals became members. Charles Haas, Max Joseph, L. Grounauer, Sol Stein, G. Hahnlein, Leo Kohn, Adolph Arnold, Simon Alshuler, Dan Schwaub, Gab. Frankel. They contributed a total of \$41. In addition, a Mr. DeBruin became a member of the congregation. On July 4, 1858, the first religious leader of the congregation was selected. He was Mr. Baer from Buffalo, New York who was a schochet, chasan and a teacher. He was hired for a temporary period of six months with a yearly salary of \$300. Carr's Halle was selected as suitable for a use as a synagogue. It was rented for the sum of \$75 per year. The first Torah was lent to the Terre Haute congregation by the Lodge Street Synagogue

in Cincinnati and was to be kept at the Terre Haute Congregation until after the high holidays. On July 18, 1858 the president of the Zion Gemeinde was asked to write a letter to Dr. Wise to ask him to be present at the dedication of the Terre Haute Zion Gemeinde. At the meeting on the 15th of August, 1858, the usual prayer for the President of the United States was offered. It was determined that all prayers should be recited by the chasan, loud and understandably, but loud praying on the part of the congregation would be strictly forbidden with the exception of the usual answer of prayers like Kaddish, etc. At the prayers where it is usual to stand up the entire congregation was to do so. No one was given permission to sit. When the Torah was taken out, no one was permitted to leave the synagogue. It was to be a punishment of 25¢ if this rule was disregarded. The coming and going out during the service was limited as much as possible. If a disturbance occurred the president had the right to punish the individual with a fine of not less than 25¢ or more than \$1. Children under six years of age were not permitted to be brought into the synagogue. By the meeting of the 26th of August, 1858, thirty-three members were now enrolled in the congregation. One hundred and six dollars was collected in Cincinnati for the support of the congregation and synagogue. The first opening of the synagogue of Terre Haute fell on Erev Rosh Hashannah of the year 5614. At the meeting of September 26, 1858, the congregation approved the expenditure of one hundred and six dollars and ten cents for benches, painting, materials, carpets, drapes and misc. A true synagogue had been opened and was being used by the congregants of Terre Haute, Indiana.<sup>18</sup>

From the bound manuscript for some, after page 30 which was a record of a meeting held on the 13th of April, 1860 nothing was entered until



page 100. On page 100 a meeting of the 29th of October, 1876 appeared. At that time, the meeting was opened by S. Frank, President. Sixteen individuals were listed as paid up. On page 100 and 101 of the manuscript it was stated on the motion of Schloss a committee was nominated to draft the by-laws. The committee was to report its findings at a public meeting on November 5 in the hall on seventh street. The meeting of Sunday, November 5, 1876 was opened by Mr. L. Goodman, President. The committee recommended the new constitution and by-laws and recorded changes in the old constitution and by-laws. The new constitution was approved.<sup>19</sup>

There is some question as to whether Jewish people who had died had been buried in Woodlawn Cemetery which was just to the east of the cemetery purchased and was used by D. H. Arnold and others. This information will be checked with existing records to determine if further information can be found about the Jews of the early 1840s.

The 1850 census lists Dave Marsh who was one of the original burial society officers as being twenty-six years old and his wife, Fanny, twenty-three years old. He was a merchant. He had several children. D. H. Arnold was thirty-seven years old. His wife, Ellender, was twenty-two. They had one child. He was a merchant. Joseph Billigheimer, a third one of the burial society officers, was twenty-eight years old. His wife, Rebecca was twenty-seven years. They had two children. His occupation was a peddler. Nathan Eliner was twenty-four, and his wife, Nancy, was twenty four. They lived with David Arnold. Cecil March and Bennett Bishopheimer, a peddler, lived with Joseph Billigheimer.<sup>20</sup>

The original Jewish cemetery was recorded in abstract #141048 and abstract number 141049 Vigo-Wade Abstract Office, Room #7, Courthouse, Terre Haute, Indiana. The graveyard which



is located at 1300 N. 1st Street in Terre Haute, Indiana, is in the backyard of an existing home. The deed record 75, page 518, of December 21, 1889 shows that the land for the cemetery was purchased some 44 years ago or 1845 by David H. Arnold and others from John Burton and wife. The premises known as the Jewish cemetery is described in deed record 17 page 655, Filed December 21, 1853. The actual transaction of this sale of the land was never recorded when sold, but rather referred to by John Burton when he was selling land around it to William Wilkinson, December 21, 1853. The people owning the Jewish Cemetery were David H. Arnold and others. The piece of land was approximately seventy-five feet by seventy-five feet. The cemetery, which had been purchased for \$100 in 1845, was abandoned before December 21, 1889 and was then sold by the trustees, Lee Goodman, Max Joseph, Adolph Arnold, and Daniel Berlau for \$90 to Willard Kiddur. 21, 22

An interesting sidelight concerning the burial ground occurred around 1925 or 1926. Mr. Taylor (William Earl Taylor current resident of the property at 1300 N. 1st Street, Terre Haute was interviewed on tape on Saturday, March 24, 1984). Mr. Taylor's grandfather or father was digging a well around 1925 or 1926 and after they had dug eighteen feet into the ground, a body fell out on top of them. They inquired around and found that a Mr. Charlie Bennett had some information. The land used to be a brick yard and prior to that a cemetery. Mr. Bennett remembered watching (he was a young man at the time) individuals digging up the bodies and removing them to Highland Lawn Cemetery. The Jewish cemetery at Highland Lawn Cemetery was opened in 1889. When Mr. Bennett was watching the removal of the corpses he recalled the individuals saying that they could not find five of the bodies.

The land was then filled in and apparently the bodies that were left sank further into the ground. Mr. Taylor bought the house in 1962. He does not know what happened to the headstones (apparently the headstones were removed to Highland Lawn Cemetery--further study will be needed to confirm this). When Mr. Taylor dug in the back yard various bones were found. These may have been the five missing bodies. Charlie Bennett had stated that all the bodies were dug up by hand in a most careful manner in order to remove all the remains of the interred individuals. The digging was done west of the house. Seventy-five bodies were removed. Most of them were thirty inches apart. Some of them, however, were forty-two inches apart. It seems that the entire back yard had been a whole cemetery.

Back to the story of the body falling on Mr. Taylor's grandfather or father when he was digging a well. The body had clothes on it and boots. When the material was exposed to the air, it disintegrated. Mr. Taylor's grandfather or father then called a Mr. Goodman (We are attempting to varify who this individual was) who came to the house and talked to Mr. Taylor about burying the bones. Mr. Taylor was given a skull and a breastbone and was sent down to the river with a shovel and a light to bury the bones in the softer soil. Mr. Taylor, who was just a young child, became terrified of the dark and threw the bones into the Wabash River. Also, while digging in the back yard, a set of Vulcan teeth were found. The teeth which are now in the Historical Museum of the Wabash Valley, had been made in Liechtenstein. The teeth had been found by the donor's father John Elvin Taylor and the donor's grandfather Newton Taylor while digging a well on the property, which was the site of the Jewish burial ground.<sup>23</sup>

In 1858, Isaac M. Wise came to Terre Haute.

In an article found in the *American Israelite* he states that when he arrived in Terre Haute in less than one hour he was able to see every Israelite in town and shook hands with every one of them. He said,

*Our brethern in this town about  
twenty in all*

(numbers as stated by individuals and newspaper articles are not necessarily accurate. In fact previous research indicates that there were at least thirty-three Jews in town instead of twenty)

*are a sober, industrious and  
intelligent class of people, no less  
respected by those of their neighbors  
than those in Indianapolis and no less  
intelligent than the Jews are everywhere.*

Rabbi Wise was especially delighted that our brethern of both these places live in peace and concord among themselves and with their neighbor, reaching each other with cordial and supporting hands of brotherhood. He then talks about the burial ground and the trustees of the burial ground that had been mentioned earlier. He states that,

*Judaism is forgotten nowhere, warm  
hearts beat everywhere on its breast  
and if circumstances are only some-  
what favorable it demonstrates its  
vitality and unabated energy. The Jew  
remains attached to his faith in the  
western wilds, the glowing sands of  
Sahara, no less than in the flourishing  
cities of Europe. Terre Haute is a small  
town situated in the center of a large  
prairie, where but a half a century ago*



Indians hunted buffalo and when having ill luck sacrificed the first game to the great spirit. But now happy and intelligent faces smile at you where ever you go. Blooming meadows, rich fields of corn and wheat, and fruitful orchards encircle a fine town inhabited by the plain, industrious and shrewd sons of the west. Posterity will consider this vast progress of culture, and improvement an incredible miracle.<sup>24</sup>

A series of newspaper articles and subscriber lists are available for review. These will be evaluated in the future to determine precisely what information may be of use to the continuing story of the Jews of Terre Haute. Subscriber lists to the *Occident* of 1855 and 1856 will be reviewed and evaluated against existing names to make sure that all individuals involved in Terre Haute Jewry at that time have been identified.

According to newspaper articles, Solomon Cohn was betrothed to Barbara Berger of Cincinnati on April 12, 1861. In 1864, there was an article in the *Deborah* talking about the fact that a congregation was in existence, but that there wasn't a synagogue. On September 16, 1864, there was an announcement of the betrothal of Augusta Erlanger to Simon Hamburger of Paris, Illinois. Of particular note is the marriage of Max Joseph to Fannie Joseph of Cincinnati at Cincinnati by Dr. Isaac M. Wise on August 28, 1864. Max and Fannie Joseph are the greatgrandparents or grandparents of Jane Smith of Terre Haute.<sup>25</sup>

Additional information concerning the Jews of this period will be brought out when studies are made of the city directories of 1860-65 which



are currently available at the Vigo County Library. Also, the 1860 census should be of value. At the American Jewish Archives there is information concerning the Jewish Women's Organizations of Terre Haute from 1859-1959 this information will be evaluated. Studies will be made of information from local newspapers, cemetery lists, etc.

Various old histories of Vigo County have been a fine source of information on distinguished Jewish members of Terre Haute. Unfortunately, the Vigo County histories rarely identify the individuals as being Jewish. Only by having knowledge of some of the important names of the community and by putting together the names of the original signers of the first synagogue constitution as well as the individuals involved in B'nai B'rith has it been possible to determine most of the Jewish individuals in the community. The following limited biographies of some important individuals came from these histories of Vigo County.

In 1854, a young man of twenty-one years of age came to Terre Haute. He was employed as a salesman at a local store. His name was Philip Schloss. Philip Schloss in 1861 enlisted in the Fort Harrison Guards, reenlisted in 1863 and continued to serve until the end of the Civil War. During the time that he was in the Fort Harrison Guards, he was still able to keep his business open. He was actively involved in business for about twenty-five years and became a leader of Terre Haute. In 1874, he was a member of the City Council on the Democratic ticket. In 1882, he was elected to the State Legislature and was then elected a State Senator from Vigo County. He was a prominent member of the Masonic Fraternity, past president of the B'nai B'rith and was considered to be one of Terre Haute's most diligent, prominent, and liberal minded citizens. He was not only personally popular, but

also was well respected within the Terre Haute community.

Simon A. Hirschler, a member of the firm of Goodman and Hirschler, came to Terre Haute in 1863 and worked for L. Goodman until 1870 when he and his present partner bought L. Goodman's interest in the business. They made a speciality of tailoring and ready made clothing and had established a trade that placed them among the leading clothiers of the city.<sup>26</sup>

According to the *Reform Advocate*, Chicago, Illinois, May 1, 1909, in the introductory passage of the article it states that with the discovery of gold in the far west thousands of pioneers crossed the country to the far west, but others stayed in the central states. It also states that about this time there came to the village of Terre Haute, Indiana (in 1849) a number of Jewish pioneers. They found here a small number of Jewish families and these with the newcomers made up the first Jewish community numbering about fifteen to twenty families. Strange to say, these pioneers of the Jewish community had little to do with the future growth of Terre Haute as most of them moved in the course of time to larger cities. It was not until the middle 50s that the tide of immigration brought to the community of Terre Haute those families which became the real founders of the Jewish community whose activities and spirit were the source of the vitality of all Jewish organizations that sprang up in the course of the years.<sup>27</sup> Apparently, the writer of this article, although he was accurate as he moved further in time toward the 1909 publishing date was inaccurate in what he stated about these initial families since they founded the first synagogue. The writer goes on to say,

*The desire for organization along the lines of Jewish activities might have*

*been felt by some, but no steps were taken until the year 1868 when a little band applied for a charter to form a local lodge.* <sup>28</sup>

It is important in any history to be very careful about the preliminary passages since many writers take considerable liberty with what they don't know and make it sound good.

### POST CIVIL WAR PERIOD 1865 to 1880

American and Indiana history which will be pertinent to the continuation of the Jewish story of Terre Haute will be researched and then discussed in the final presentation. Jewish history during this time period was made primarily by the German Jews. A statistical survey of 10,000 German Jews who arrived between 1850 and 1880 showed that by 1890 these individuals were in the following types of occupations.

1. 50% were businessmen,
2. 5% in the professions including banking,
3. 20% were accountants, bookkeepers, clerks and agents,
4. 12½% were tailors, jewelers, cigar makers, and butchers,
5. Less than 10% were farmers, common laborers, or servants,
6. 1% were still peddlers. Very few scholars, statesman, or scientists of national note were produced.<sup>29</sup> However, Jews began to build financial empires as bankers, financiers, and traders. By 1871, German Jews were involved in almost any kind of enterprise especially the retail stores. Jews invented and instituted in the United States the mass production of clothing, an industry that grew enormously and was emulated by other



countries. Southern Jews had fought for the Confederacy and northern Jews for the Republic. The Jewish people were involved in politics, in religion, in business, in the community at large.

During this time period, Reform Judaism grew at a very rapid rate. It did so because it was based on a new way of thinking, the American way of thinking. Rabbi Wise was the leader and the founder of much of what became the Reform Jewish movement.

Meanwhile in Terre Haute, coal and the railroads kept the economy growing very, very rapidly. Terre Haute had become a community which was serving a huge area not only of urban residents, but also of rural residents.

On June 8, 1868, the Gan Eden Lodge #110 of the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith was organized and received a charter (the minutes of 1868-1881 which are available through the Indiana Jewish Historical Society will be reviewed and key points will be added to the continuing story of Terre Haute). Judy Thorman became the president and Simon Hirschler the secretary. Judy Thorman was a member of the firm of Thorman and Schloss a manufacturer of clothing and a dealer in furnished goods. This was the firm that had been established by the Honorable Philip Schloss who had been discussed previously. Mr. Thorman was very active in a variety of public affairs within the community.

The B'nai B'rith had three major functions. Under the inspiration of benevolence, brotherly love and harmony it responded liberally to the needs of local and national charities, generated other Jewish organizations, promoted a spirit of solidarity for a healthy social and communal life. The B'nai B'rith's founders were M. Joseph, A. Herz, S. Straus, Philip Schloss, Samuel Frank, and fourteen other individuals who will be discussed at a later time.



The *American Israelite* article of 1868 states that the Odd Fellow Hall was used for the high holy days. Max Joseph, president of the congregation officiated and A. Cahn was the chazan. It also stated that B'nai B'rith had been successful and there was a hope for an enlarged Jewish congregation.<sup>30</sup> The Jewish people in Terre Haute also joined the Masons, Humboldt Lodge #42 AF and AM chartered June 23, 1870. Several famous Jews including Philip Schloss were past masters of the lodge. Jews were also active in the Goethe Lodge #382 International Order of Odd Fellows, charter dated October, 1871.<sup>31</sup> Several of the important Jewish men in town including Emanuel Rothchilds, Philip Schloss, and others were members of the lodge.

In 1872, the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Aid Society was formed (at the American Jewish Archives there is a notation about information concerning women's groups from 1859 to 1959. this will be investigated carefully to determine if there was a forerunner for the society). The society was formed with a purpose of helping any unfortunates who happened to fall into straits within the community. It was also formed as a social center. A newcomer, a Mrs. J. Levy, suggested establishing the society. The first meeting was held at the home of Mrs. L. Rothschild and the first regular meeting at the home of Mrs. S. Mack. The Hebrew Ladies Aid Society gave assistance to non-Jews as well as to Jews. It supported, both financially and morally, the movement toward the formation and maintenance of a Reform congregation. From the Society the men in the community then formed a Jewish Aid society, although the women still stayed very active in this organization. Mrs. Herz Strauss was its president for thirteen years. This organization did charitable work before the time of organized charity. As a result of the forming of the Jewish Aid Society, the Hebrew Ladies

Benevolent Aid Society was disbanded.<sup>32</sup>

Although there are important individuals that still have to be investigated and described in the coming work, one that can be mentioned briefly is Dr. Leo Weinstein. Dr. Weinstein came to Terre Haute on May 1, 1878. He was a member of the City Council, a member of the Board of Health, and one of the founders of Union Hospital.

### *1880 TO 1920--THE COMING OF THE IMMIGRANTS*

In 1882, the so called May Laws which were highly anti-Jewish, were enacted in Russia. Jewish immigration intensified sharply. From 1881 to 1923, over 2 3/4 million Jews from Eastern Europe entered the United States. These Jews came mostly from the "Pale of Settlement" which was composed of fifteen Russian and ten Polish provinces. They came to the United States to escape the terrible persecution which was occurring in Europe. These Jews, unlike the German Jews of earlier, who had scattered across the United States, concentrated in the horrible tenements in the Lower East Side of New York City and in other eastern cities of the United States. They were mostly penniless and from a way of life which was well behind the type of life-style existing in the United States at that time. These Jews arrived in an alien and hostile culture. The German Jews assisted the Eastern European Jews through the Hebrew Immigration Society and in 1882, dispersed some 2600 Jewish immigrants to 165 cities in 32 different states. As the pogroms became worse in Europe, the immigration increased from Europe. In 1892, HIAS was formed in New York to help immigrating Jews. Overwhelmingly, the movement was that of young people. The Jewish migrants had a higher proportion of skilled workers than the other immigrants from Europe.

The Jewish experience in New York City was one of ghettos, poverty, sweatshops and disease.

In 1893, Lillian Wald, a German Jew, founded the public health nursing movement. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, many Jewish organizations were formed and the Jews became very strong in the union movement. In 1912, Haddassah was formed, in 1913 the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith was founded.<sup>33</sup>

These forty years of Jewish American History was a period of mass immigration, constant fueling between Jews, Jews working together, development of political strength, improved financial status, and a vast variety of organizations and groups set up to improve life.

In 1880, in Terre Haute, there were 25,000 people. It was a center of agriculture, coal mining, and manufacturing. It had huge corn fields, excellent timber, and a growing vital population. By 1881, there were eight railroads and a navigable river flowing through Terre Haute. By 1884, there were thirty-four unions and clubs and a variety of musical societies, secret societies, newspapers and magazines. The Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce evolved from the Terre Haute Board of Trade. By 1895, there were 38,000 people, and Terre Haute was the fourth largest city in Indiana. There were more than one hundred industrial firms, as well as other eminities. The community was highly unionized. The only way to describe Terre Haute until 1920 was vibrant, a boom town. By 1915, there was a population of 75,000 people. The city was now described as aspiring, ambitious and vigorous. Eight inter-continental railroads and interurban lines brought 3/4 million people within two hours of Terre Haute.<sup>34</sup> By 1919, although Terre Haute had a substantial German population, the city was becoming anti-German.<sup>35</sup>

Terre Haute Jewish history is described



in 1882 in an article in the *American Israelite*. On Sunday, November 5, 1882 the Israelites of Terre Haute organized the Hebrew congregation of Terre Haute which was an outgrowth of the Zion Gemeinde. President Max Joseph, Vice-President Samuel Frank, Treasurer Adolph Arnold, Secretary August Goodman. The congregation had thirty members. It met in a beautiful hall which was used for Jewish interests (an investigation will be made to determine the address of this hall). The B'nai B'rith Lodge and Sunday School were also housed here. The Sunday School had been in existence since 1879. It met on Friday nights and was conducted by D. Goldman formerly of Evansville. The charter members included Max Herbst, A. Herz, Louis Rothschild, Theodore Frank, Philip Schloss, and twelve to fourteen other individuals. The congregation was an outgrowth of the congregation in existence in 1876 which was an outgrowth of the Zion Gemeinde and all of the congregations since then. In the meeting on October 29, 1876, S. Frank who was the president held an election of officers with the new president becoming L. Goodman, vice-president E. Rothschild, secretary A. Herz, cemetery committee Phillip Schloss. On the motion of Mr. Schloss a committee was nominated to draft new by-laws and to report at a public meeting on November 5 in the hall at Seventh Street. On November 5, the meeting was opened by Mr. L. Goodman, the president and the committee for the constitution and by-laws reported that these by-laws and constitution were approved. The record of these two meetings were in the same red bound book that the original information came from concerning the Zion Gemeinde and the introduction discussing the burial society of 1849.<sup>36</sup> Why there was a gap in the use of this book is not known. In 1882, the old burial association was consolidated with the new



organization. In January, 1883, David Goldman was hired to conduct services and teach the Sabbath School. Mr. Goldman was a lawyer and Justice of the Peace. Prior to this service, services had been conducted at a hall at 5th and Ohio. David Goldman died in 1886. At David Goldman's funeral, A. B. Felsenthal was the principle person conducting the service. A. B. Felsenthal was the attorney who handled the "quieting of the deed" of the Jewish cemetery in the court case of December 21, 1889.

In 1886, fifteen men formed B'nai Abraham. H. G. Goldberg became the first president from 1886 to 1896. He then moved to Linton, Indiana. The synagogue was in a rented hall at 11th and Wabash Avenue. B'nai Abraham then moved to 12th and Swan. The B'nai Abraham constitution in hand written form was found in a plastic trash sack. It was dated 1893.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, the Hebrew Congregation of Terre Haute became the Hebrew Congregation and burial Association of the City of Terre Haute on April 2, 1888. There were fifteen signatories to this document.<sup>38</sup> The purpose of the Hebrew Congregation was to purchase a place of worship and a burial ground. The warranty deed for cemetery purchase, which was adjacent to Highland Lawn Cemetery, was made for 6.25 acres on May 14, 1888.<sup>39</sup> The services on the Day of Atonement were held at the Phoenix Club rooms on September 18, 1888 on a Friday evening. At this time, the Reform congregation did not have a synagogue. There were thirty Jewish families. The services were conducted by A. Goodman. Some services were conducted by M. Joseph at the rooms of the International Order of B'nai B'rith. On May 15, 1890, the Reform Congregation purchased the German Evangelical Church at 420 South 4th Street for \$3600.<sup>40</sup> In 1889, Alexander Lyons, a rabbinical student, visited Terre Haute. In

1891, Rabbi Lyons was installed as the first rabbi in Terre Haute by Rabbi Isaac Myer Wise (Rabbi Wise had been associated with the Terre Haute Jewish congregation for many years).<sup>41</sup>

A local newspaper of September 26, 1891 describes the dedication of Temple Israel as a notable event in Terre Haute church history. Subheadline read,

*First regular place of worship. A large audience present. Rabbi Wise's address, "How We Built the Temple."*

*The dedication of Temple Israel occurred last evening as a notable event in the annal of church history in Terre Haute. The temple is a handsome building facing the west on South 4th street between Swan and Oak. The interior decorations are done in excellent taste. The walls are pale blue, being a pleasing contrast with the higher colors of frieze and ceiling. Above the entrance is the gallery for the organ and the choir. . . . This is the first time that the Jewish people of Terre Haute have had a regular place of worship and it was not strange that the dedicatory exercises were to many of the congregation as unfamiliar as they would have been to those not professing the Jewish faith. Throughout the exercises, there was marked with an earnestness of unostentatiousness and tone of simplicity that held the large congregation in rapt attention. The dedication of the scrolls and of the everlasting light was begun by Miss Rosa Hirschler whose rather long declaration was recited with the*

clearest enunciation, and shorter recitations by Miss Elsie Loebe and Miss May Joseph. . . . After chanting the responses to the prayers impressively read by Rabbi Lyons, the newly chosen pastor, made a short address in which drawing a striking picture of man's three-fold life--the physical, the mental, and the spiritual. He symbolized the temple as the school house of the soul. In his brief, but fervent address he paid a beautiful tribute to his revered preceptor the Rev. Dr. Wise whom he then introduced. Dr. Wise is a man well advanced in years and with his rather stooped figure, well rounded head set down on his shoulders, and sparse white beard, he impressed his hearers as he came to the pulpit with rather faltering step, as being too feeble for a prolonged speech after his journey from Cincinnati. But in a moment the eyes are lighted up, the glow comes to the cheeks, and as the Rev. Dr. broadened on the theme outlined by Rabbi Lyons there was a virorous speech that would have betokened a much younger man. . . . The address was in the nature of a homily. . . . In the three parts of the lives that should be lead the past with its memories of what the fathers had done, the present and the future to which the children should be devoted, Rabbi Wise used a happy illustration from the Talmud where the old man is reproved by a passing stranger for planting a tree that would not bear fruit for a hundred years. The old man rebuked the scoffer by telling how that every bit of fruit that he ate he returned thanks to his



fathers who a hundred years before  
had planted trees that he might eat.  
In this conversational vein Dr. Wise  
held his congregation without realizing  
that time had gone by so fast. After  
a closing prayer and hymn the con-  
gregation with their invited guests  
went to the Phoenix Club rooms where  
ices and light refreshments were  
served. . . . Miss Strouse then  
recited a poem which indicated how  
hard the youthful congregation had  
struggled to raise the necessary  
funds.

#### HOW WE BUILT THE TEMPLE

Oh how very hard we've worked  
This little temple of ours to build,  
Not one of us a task has shirked  
That our treasury might be filled.

We've had all kinds of meetings  
To see what could be done.  
'Twas always the same greeting,  
"Where will we get the mon?"

Then we set ourselves to thinking--  
The result--a great big fair,  
I wonder we didn't take to drinking  
But we ladies didn't dare.

We made all sorts of fancy things,  
Such as pickles, pies and cake,  
We raffled off a wedding ring

The chances no bachelor would take.

We begged, we borrowed, we made merchants  
sick,

We fussed, we quarreled, but together we did  
stick,

We had minstrels, we had tableaux,  
We had dreams of all kinds,



But we eclipsed the climax when  
We, the people dined  
On Barnum's day.

The tables were all so white and clean,  
The windows were filled with pies and cream,  
And the girls with anxious beating hearts  
Wondered if the people would buy their tarts.

Slowly the procession went down  
And the crowd filed in to eat,  
Oh, how we worked and smiled so funny.

To hear that sound--the jingle of money.  
And now our temple is finished at last  
And we can look proudly back on the past.  
Oh, may our future happy and bright be  
Is the wish of yours--tru-lee.<sup>42</sup>

The people of the Jewish Congregation in the 1880s and 1890s moved in a variety of directions and in a variety of organizations. Much of the activities of these organizations will be studied by means of a review of minutes that are available at the American Jewish Archives and the Indiana Jewish Historical Society.

The Phoenix Club was formed in the 1880s (the exact time will be checked by reviewing documents and old business guides at the Vigo County Library). September 18, 1888, the Jewish community used the Phoenix Club rooms on the Day of Atonement. The first president was apparently Philip Schloss and the first club rooms were apparently between 4th and 5th on Wabash Avenue. They were located over A. Arnold's clothing store. In a few years the club was moved to the third floor over 512 and 514 Wabash Avenue. Then a building was built at 5th and Walnut Street. Then finally to the site on east Wabash Avenue. In a taped conversation on October 25, 1984, with Milt and Sid Levin of Corner Furniture Store, additional information about the Phoenix Club was discussed.

Apparently, very few records of the Phoenix Club are currently in existence. Many of them were destroyed when they became wet a number of years ago. Milt Levin remembered when the old club burned down about fifty years ago, actually it was in 1927. A new club was then built on east Wabash Avenue. Apparently there were two clubs, a City Club where people played cards and had dances, had a bowling alley, and a Country Club where a golf course and swimming pool would be available. The reason why the Phoenix Club was first started and maintained over the years was because the Jewish businessmen and other Jews were not permitted to join the country clubs of Terre Haute. Jews did belong to the Masons and the Odd Fellows, but these were fraternal organizations and social organizations had a higher status. Over the years, the Phoenix Club was used for a variety of other Jewish functions such as welfare dinners, providing Sunday School rooms when the temple was being refurbished, etc. In fact, the Phoenix Club in many ways became the equivalent of a Jewish community center, since when Jews requested use of the club for Jewish activities it was always granted.<sup>43</sup>

B'nai Abraham, the Orthodox synagogue, was named after Abraham Levin father of Myer, Morris, Max, and Isaac P. Levin. It was established in 1886 with a membership of sixteen in a rented hall at 11th and Wabash Avenue. The first president of the congregation was H. Goldberg and Meyer Levin was vice-president. Later a more suitable building was secured at 12th and Swan Streets. In 1896 Meyer Levin was elected president and along with Isaac F. Leventhall the vice-president encouraged the purchasing of a building site at 12th and Mulberry Street where a synagogue was built. Meyer Levin served as president for

thirty-five years until his retirement in 1931. He was elected honorary president for life. Ben Becker followed Meyer Levin and headed the congregation until the consolidation in 1935.<sup>44</sup> Orthodox Judaism was alive and well. In an oral history we discussed what Orthodox Jewish life was like before the first World War. Everything was done according to custom. The holidays were special, Friday night meant that you could not even pick up a pencil. It was a traditional way of life which was warm and lovely.<sup>45</sup>

A number of distinguished merchants had lived or worked in Terre Haute over the years. Abraham Gimbel died in Terre Haute on January 13, 1893 and is interred in the Highland Lawn Cemetery.<sup>46</sup> Other businessmen have already been mentioned, still others are yet to come.

The Sewing Society which was the ladies auxillary of Temple Israel started in 1891 under the leadership of Mrs. Herz Strauss. They supported the choir and raised money for beautifying the temple. They promoted "Great Fairs" of the past and annual bizzarres of the present (1909).<sup>47</sup> Both hospitals had rooms furnished by the Sewing Society.

The Terre Haute section of the National Council of Jewish Women chartered in 1898 had its first meeting and was brought to order by Miss Rebecca Torner, president in October 1899. The Council of Jewish Women was an outgrowth of the Temple Builders. They provided teachers and assistance to the Sunday School. An article in the *American Israelite* stated that on October 24, 1899 the ladies of the Hebrew Ladies Aid Society will hold a fair November 15 to 19 for the purpose of raising sufficient funds for the purchase of a handsome organ for Temple Israel.<sup>48</sup>

From 1899 to 1909 Jewish women interested in the study of Jewish life, history and literature, joined together in organizations for this purpose.



In 1909 they formed a Chautauqua Circle in conjunction with the Council. Forty-five members belonged to the group which was chaired by Mrs. A. Joseph. Mrs. Joseph went on to become a member of the National Committee of the National Council of Jewish Women.

In 1905, a Junior Council was formed. Minutes from these council meetings were available and will be studied for pertinent information concerning the group.

These various councils and groups, not only engaged in study and socialization, but also participated in the activities of the Terre Haute community in a variety of important posts. Additional information concerning the contributions of Jewish people in Terre Haute, Indiana will be forthcoming in the expansion of this work into a full sized manuscript.

The interurban trolley system radiated from Terre Haute to the surrounding areas. It became a new high speed tool of business. It carried passengers and freight. The towering sixty foot cars dwarfed the equipment of city lines. The low fares, the frequent stations, and the hourly service for local traffic contributed to the vigorous trade of this west central Indiana city. Terre Haute retailers as well as wholesalers including many individuals of the Jewish community utilized the interurban trolley as a means of building their business, extending services to areas outside of the city, and helped provide a better way of life for the community. Some of the important people of this era will be mentioned now and expanded upon at a later date in a more comprehensive manuscript. The first rabbi of the Reform congregation was Rabbi Alexander Lyons. Rabbi Lyons graduated from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1890 and came to Terre Haute. A newspaper article of May 1, 1909 describes him as an individual who not only won



the hearts of the Jewish community, but also the larger community by his eloquence and public spirit. He was a radical within Reform Judaism and impressed his personality in this regard upon the congregation. Rabbi Lyons became known in Terre Haute and the surrounding territory as a speaker of great eloquence and power and as a public man of broad caliber. He went from Terre Haute to Albany, New York and then on to Brooklyn, New York as rabbi.

Rabbi Deinard came to Terre Haute in 1896. He had pursued studies in Europe and also at Carlyle and De Pauw Universities. In Terre Haute he became known as a brilliant thinker and a deep student whose scholarship won him the respect and esteem of the community. He left Terre Haute in 1900 to go to a smaller congregation in Chicago in order to have time to pursue further study at the University of Chicago.

Rabbi Emil M. Leipziger was the second graduate of Hebrew Union College to come to Terre Haute. He graduated in 1900 and immediately took the pulpit at Temple Israel. Rabbi Leipziger was deeply involved in philanthropy. In 1909, he became the treasurer for the Local Society for Organizing Charity. He then became the President of the Indiana Conference of State Charities.<sup>49</sup> Adolph Herz arrived in Terre Haute in 1867 from Germany. In less than twenty years, he became a leading merchant. He was President of the Commercial Club which was the forerunner of the Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce. Other famous Jews such as Ben Blumberg was also President of this organization. Adolph Herz was active for many years in the Terre Haute community. He was president of the Chamber of Commerce, Director McKean National Bank, Trustee Rose Orphan Home, President of the Local Social Settlement, a director of the Terre Haute Society for Organizing Charity, and many other organizations. On the front page

of the newspapers December 18, 1917, were the headlines reading, "City loses man loved by people." This was the proper headline for the obituary of Adolph Herz. Although his funeral was private, all downtown stores were closed out of respect for him.<sup>50</sup>

Lee Goodman came to Terre Haute in 1865. He was active in the Jewish community and a member of the City Council.

Harry T. Schloss, son of Philip Schloss, became a city councilman who was also President of the Reform congregation and Grand President of B'nai B'rith.

Dr. Herman Bernheimer came to Terre Haute in 1882. He went to medical school and returned to Terre Haute in 1899 to practice medicine. Mrs. Mary Ann Mack who came to Terre Haute in 1853 at age seventeen became the President of the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society in 1872. She was also active in the community.

Mrs. Herz Straus was a charter member and president for thirteen years of the Hebrew Ladies Benevolent Society. She became known for her charity work and was a member of the board for a Local Society for Organized Charity. She was an honorary member of many organizations.

Adolph Arnolds who was involved in all kinds of charities was a member of the board of Union Hospital.

Mrs. Harry T. Schloss was President of the Fresh Air Mission.

Miss Helen Arnold was Chief Executive of the Vigo Human Society.

Four Jews were members of the 1909 board of directors of the local Society of Organized Charities.

In 1910 on June 15, the Hebrew Congregation and Burial Association of Terre Haute signed an agreement with Simon B. Eisendrath to build a new Temple Israel at its present site on South 6th

Street.<sup>51</sup> Mr. Eisendrath was a famous architect who had served as Commissioner of Buildings in Chicago before he helped form an architectural firm. He designed numerous buildings including synagogues on the east coast. He designed the Free Synagogue House of New York City, Temple Beth Eloheim, Temple Shaari Zedek, Hebrew Home for the Aged, and the Hebrew Educational Building of Brooklyn.<sup>52</sup>

In a *Tribune* article of December 2, 1911, a description of the ceremony of dedication stated,

*Temple Israel, a beautiful new edifice which has grown out of twenty years of progress of the congregation of twenty-five families which first organized a congregation in this city was dedicated Friday night. Impressive ceremonies were continued Saturday morning. Rabbi Louis Grossman of the Plum Street Temple in Cincinnati who had prepared Rabbi Leipziger for entering school and had been a close friend and counselor since then, gave the major address. In eloquent and impressive words he stated, "With changing times the Hebrews are entering into a nobler and broader era."*

The speaker urged the training of the children and the teachings of their religion and that their obligations to society was a duty the present generation could not neglect. He said the schools are secular and rightly so. The business world is the one in which honesty and fairness are indiscriminately applied to men of all nations. He stated, however, religious and social gatherings in the temple should have the effect of giving a firmer and more thorough training in the Jewish faith to the Jewish congregation and bring the congregation



closer together.

Members of Temple Israel gave much credit to Harry Schloss, who was the President of Temple Israel, for the raising of the funds to build the new synagogue. During the time that the temple was being constructed, services were held at the Congregational Church on Ohio Street through the courtesy of the pastor and the congregation of that church.<sup>53</sup>

There will be an attempt to gather together a good picture of what occurred between 1910 and 1920 in Terre Haute as well as the Jewish community by selectively choosing items from record books of various organizations and discussing these items or events with current residents of the Jewish community who have knowledge from either listening to parents and/or personal experience of what occurred during this time period. For instance, Jews were involved with the Women's Department Club, involved with penny lunches in schools and a host of other kinds of activities.

### *1920 to 1985--THE PERIOD OF INCREDIBLE CHANGE*

The Jewish experience in the United States and in Europe, Vigo County Experience and Jewish Terre Haute experience goes through a series of violent changes in society. Following the First World War the country is moving forward in a desire to satisfy suppressed desires, but at the same time, another group of our society is without work, the farm community is suffering badly, we go from the rip-roaring twenties through the depression of the thirties at which time not only did the world suffer from the depressed state of world economy, but the beginning of a horrible suffering of the Hitler era starts. History then moves forward through the beginnings of the



Second World War, Post Second World War, recessions and booms, the Korean War, Viet Nam War, and a vast variety of changes in world society. The State of Israel is born or rather reborn and Jews for the first time, other than the United States, had a place to go to where they had total freedom.<sup>54</sup>

During the course of all of these violent changes in society, the Jews of Terre Haute continued to contribute to the community vastly more per capita than the overall community contributes. Jews are involved in all types of community, welfare and charitable efforts. These efforts will be described in a series of oral histories taken with a series of individuals from the Jewish community and elsewhere.

In 1926, a new orthodox synagogue is built at 5th and Poplar Street.<sup>55</sup> By 1936, on January 8 the Reform congregation of Temple Israel and the Orthodox congregation of B'nai Abraham became the first merger of this type in the United States to the best of our knowledge.<sup>56</sup> The United Temple was lead by President Ben Blumberg who was to make innumerable contributions, not only to the Jewish community, but also to the overall Terre Haute community including the building of the Boys Club and the purchase of the old synagogue for the Senior Citizens of Terre Haute, Indiana. The United Temple provided Reform, Conservative and Orthodox worship, both a Hebrew School and a Sunday School and used both congregational buildings to satisfy these needs. In addition, Boy Scout Troop #5 met, the Council of Jewish Women, B'nai B'rith, the Council of Jewish Juniors, the Temple Ladies Auxillary, the Zionist Organization, and other Jewish groups met within these buildings.

Terre Haute in many ways was similar to the larger Jewish communities. Terre Haute had and still has a Jewish Welfare Federation, went through

a lodge era, had multiple synagogues, had a long history of B'nai B'rith enterprise (at this point individuals still belong to B'nai B'rith, but the organization is inactive) participated in community relations, operated a country club, boy scouts, Jewish War Veterans. The Jews of Terre Haute were involved and still are involved in music, drama, and the other arts as well as the professions of law, politics, medicine, and the universities. The Jews have made enormous charitable contributions to the community.

Two major additional trends will need to be explored:

1. The history of Indiana State University and the role it played in the Jewish community as well as the role that Jewish professors have played at the university.

2. The history of public health of Vigo County has consistently had as part of it a Jewish input. From the beginnings of public health to the development of hospitals, to health officers such as Dr. Werner Loewenstein to public health professors. It is interesting that Lillian Wald was the first public health nurse. She was a German Jew who had to do something to help the Jewish people of New York. This all is part of the public health picture.

## SUMMARY

The study of the Terre Haute Jewish community will probably take an additional three to five years in order to record the many useful oral histories from individuals still living in the community. These oral histories not only present a view of Terre Haute Jewish life, but also Terre Haute life from approximately 1900 to the present. In order to carry out these oral histories properly,

it will be necessary to read and pull out items from a variety of transcripts from a variety of organizations. It will also be necessary to conduct research not only in the Jewish Archives, but also such organizations as the Chamber of Commerce, Literary Societies, etc. The purpose of the study has been and will be to provide a record of Terre Haute Judaism from the first known Jew of 1827 to the present date. It also is to indicate a positive Jewish image of contributions to the community and set forth the useful pattern of life which the children can use as a basis for their contributions. Finally, the parents Confirmation speech of 1985 to the confirmants aptly states why a Jewish history which is accurately accumulated and properly set forth needs to be done.

*From generation to generation  
thou shall love the Lord your God with  
all your mind, with all your strength,  
with all your being. Set these words  
which I command you this day upon  
your heart, teach them faithfully to  
your children, speak of them in your  
home and on your way, when you lie  
down and when you rise up. Bind  
them as a sign upon your hand, let  
them be a symbol before your eyes,  
inscribe them on the doorposts of your  
house and on your gates.*

*The mitzvot of teaching your  
children to love God, to become good  
adults has been a leading obligation of  
Jewish men and women throughout the  
generations. The first Jewish congrega-  
tion was formed in Terre Haute in  
1858, and the first formal act was to  
hire a lehrer or teacher for the children.  
Today 127 years later, we the parents  
of the confirmants are sharing a simchah*

with the congregation, friends, and relatives.

David, Sarah, Scott, Laura, Kathy, and Meredith, you have today completed your formal Jewish education. We hope that this is but a beginning of a lifetime of being part of the Jewish community, of creating a Jewish home and family, of serving yourself and your family, your community, and your God.

One day you too will be fulfilling the commandment "Thou shall love the Lord your God with all your mind, with all your strength, with all your being. Set these words which I command you this day upon your heart, teach them diligently to your children."<sup>57</sup>



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(*Wedding List - Miriam Joseph and Isaac L. Goodman, January 3, 1905.*)

## APPENDIX A - ORAL HISTORIES

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The Indiana Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1972 to collect, preserve, and publish material dealing with the two hundred years of Jewish life in Indiana. Whatever illuminates the Jewish experience in Indiana is of interest, concern, and value. It is our aim to gather, preserve, and evaluate the records of synagogues, temples, and societies, as well as personal papers, diaries, memoirs, governmental documents, newspaper and magazine articles, photographs, even burial and cemetery records.

Another goal of the IJHS is to provide data hitherto not available to historians, scholars, and authors, thus helping to fill the void that exists in providing Protestant, Catholic, and other scholars an awareness of the role played by Jews and Jewish communities in the creation of the religious climate in Indiana.

The Indiana Jewish Historical Society has an archive collection of more than four thousand items. In addition to past records, the society is also interested in obtaining current records, for such records will be history for coming generations. In many instances, the society will make photostatic copies and return original copies.

The IJHS is a tax exempt membership organization. Its elected officers and board members live in fourteen Indiana cities.

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